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SUBJECT: ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

REF: STATE 042623

1. USUN RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM JORGE SAMPAIO, UN HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS, IN RESPONSE TO THE LETTER FROM EUR A/S VOLKER (REFTEL).

BEGIN TEXT

Dear Assistant Secretary Volker
Thank you for your letter dated 22 April regarding Secretary Rice's identification of the US Citizen Dialogue Program as a program that furthers the goals of the Alliance of Civilizations.

Based on the description of the program in your letter it appears to be very much in line with the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations to build bridges across diverse societies, engage youth proactively, and foster intercultural understanding. In practical terms, I believe there are a number of ways in which the Alliance of Civilizations can engage with the Citizen Dialogue Program in a manner that would help extend its outreach and impact while also advancing the Alliance's goal of amplifying constructive and moderate points of view. Indeed, it would seem that the American Muslims who participate in the Citizen Dialogue program would be likely candidates for integration into the Alliance's "Rapid Response Media Mechanism" (RRMM), a project through which constructive perspectives are disseminated via mass media in an attempt to foster greater understanding and mutual respect.

Through the RRMM, civil society leaders, scholars, and activists with special insight into cross-cultural relations are provided public relations training so as to build their capacity to engage the media effectively. They are then featured on an on-line resource (www.globalexnerfinder.org) that is increasingly being used by mass media outlets worldwide to invite commentary on matters of cross-cultural understanding - particularly as pertains to relations between Western and predominantly Muslim societies. It would seem that a cooperative arrangement between the Alliance and the Citizen Dialogue Program could extend the reach of the participants in your program while advancing our efforts at the Alliance to provide broader platforms for voices of moderation, particularly during times of increased cross-cultural tension.

Since my appointment as High Representative of the Alliance last year, the Alliance has shifted fully from a report-writing body to a pragmatic action-oriented initiative. In this light, it is exactly this kind of practical programmatic cooperation that I most welcome from UN Member States. I therefore hope that we can advance the idea in concrete terms in the coming months. To this end, I have directed the Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat at UN Headquarters to make contact with your office so as to arrange follow-up discussions. I look forward to the results of these discussions and to a fruitful cooperation with the Citizen Dialogue Program.

Yours Sincerely,
(signed)
Jorge Sampaio

cc: H.E. Miguel Angel Moratinos, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Spain

H.E. All Babacan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkey
END TEXT